

EXHIBIT 19

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND**

STATE OF MARYLAND; et al.,

Plaintiffs,

v.

CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND
COMMUNITY SERVICE, OPERATING AS
AMERICORPS; et al.,

Defendants.

C.A. No. 1:25-cv-01363-DLB

DECLARATION OF LISA CLARK

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, I, Lisa Clark, hereby declare as follows:

1. I am a resident of the State of Maryland. I am over the age of 18 and have personal knowledge of all the facts stated herein, including as based on my experience and information provided to me. If called as a witness, I could and would testify competently to the matters set forth below.

2. I have been employed by Frostburg State University as the Director of the Appalachian Service Through Action and Resources (ASTAR) AmeriCorps Program, the name of our University's AmeriCorps organization, for over 30 years.

3. Frostburg State University plays a vital role in advancing the educational, economic, and civic landscape of Western Maryland. As a comprehensive institution of higher education, Frostburg delivers high-quality academic programs while also serving as a critical regional anchor. The University actively supports regional development through strategic partnerships, applied faculty expertise, and robust community engagement initiatives. Notably,

Frostburg has served as the host of a regional intermediary AmeriCorps program, which strengthens the capacity of Maryland's nonprofit organizations and government agencies by placing dedicated national service members throughout the state with organizations that do not have the size or capacity to host an AmeriCorps program of their own

4. ASTAR was in operation continuously from 1994 until April 25, 2025, when we received notice that AmeriCorps had terminated the program. The ASTAR AmeriCorps Program provided direct and substantive services both on our University campus and through our partner organizations in Maryland. AmeriCorps members provided direct service to build capacity within the organizations they served. Services included, among other things, educational programming, health and wellness, drug awareness, senior programming, food pantries, and community gardens.

5. As Director of the ASTAR AmeriCorps Program, I oversaw the operational and financial aspects of the federal AmeriCorps grant to our university, including daily interactions with members and site partners. I have served with the ASTAR program from its inception.

6. On the evening of April 25, Maryland Deputy Secretary of Service and Civic Innovation, the Executive Director and Associate Director of The Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism state officials informed me that AmeriCorps had terminated Frostburg's ASTAR program, effective immediately. According to the termination notice, ASTAR was required to immediately cease all activities associated with AmeriCorps and could not incur any additional expenses, other than those necessary to shut down the program. Because we received the termination notice so late in the evening of April 25, and because the notice required the immediate stoppage of all programming, the University had only a few hours to decide how to handle this information, consider legal ramifications, develop termination letters, and inform AmeriCorps members and sites of the termination. In the days since AmeriCorps shutdown the

ASTAR program, ASTAR's small staff have been unable to devote any time and resources to ASTAR's core mission of serving our community partners. Instead, our resources have been strained as we have been forced to devote our time and resources to addressing inquiries from members, ensuring all members understand the ramifications of the termination, communicating with programs and members related to the closeout process and steps that will need to be taken to properly exit members for compelling personal circumstances, reviewing contracts to determine which can be immediately canceled, and working with our grants office to identify what costs are eligible for reimbursements such as health care, final member living stipends, etc.

7. Prior to the termination, Frostburg received no warning from AmeriCorps that there was even a possibility that ASTAR was subject to cutbacks, let alone complete and immediate termination. Because ASTAR was required to cease all operations associated with AmeriCorps immediately, the University was unable to strategically plan to attempt to transition AmeriCorps members and staff off projects and allow site partners to attempt to find alternatives to continue community programming without the support of ASTAR AmeriCorps members. This sudden termination has harmed the University's reputation and trust as a reliable partner and damaged its ability to positively support regional development and act as the anchor service institution for western Maryland. Certainly, if ASTAR had received notice and the opportunity to comment on AmeriCorps's decision to largely dismantle the agency and shut down our program, I would have done so in hopes of persuading AmeriCorps to reverse course.

8. For more than 30 years, ASTAR operated a robust service program that received vital support and funds from AmeriCorps. ASTAR AmeriCorps members served without receiving salary or hourly wage, but each Full and Half-time member received a modest living stipend that was paid from AmeriCorps funding. Full-time members were also eligible to receive health

benefits and childcare benefits, which were also paid by AmeriCorps funding. After completing a term of service and enrolling in the National Service Trust, AmeriCorps members are eligible to receive the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award directly from AmeriCorps. This year, full-time members who complete their term of service receive an education award of \$7,395. AmeriCorps also supported the ASTAR program by providing, among other things:

- a. Member technical support through their national helpdesk.
- b. Training in support of efficient and effective management of AmeriCorps Programs, including national and state criminal history checks, compliance, and best practices for recruitment, member experience, and assessment.
- c. Trainings in support of members, including “Life After AmeriCorps” and professional development.

9. For the current grant year, ASTAR was awarded \$389,201 in federal funding.

This money was critical to the program’s operation and ASTAR could not operate without this federal funding, including as follows:

- a. Federal grant funding supported ASTAR personnel, as well as operational and member support costs for the ASTAR program. This year, AmeriCorps funding supported one full-time ASTAR staff member, and two consultants under contract. This year, ASTAR recruited and enrolled 59 AmeriCorps members, who were placed at non-profit organizations and schools. Our ten site (non-profit) partners included food banks, family support centers, an educational farm, and Special Olympics Maryland. Through the University’s Education Department, we have placed members at over 15 elementary, middle, and high schools. At their service sites, members

engaged in a wide range of service activities, such as assisting their schools with developing and implementing new and engaging lesson plans, developing engaging experiential learning trips, providing food to the local communities, expanding programming for athletes through Special Olympics, and providing resources for families of marginalized communities within the state.

- b. In addition, ASTAR has routinely enrolled members to perform service at Frostburg State University, and ASTAR members were serving at the University's Center for Literary Arts, the Children's Literature Center, the PAWS Pantry, and the Biology Department. Their service was vital to the Frostburg campus and larger community.
- c. The Center for Literary Arts ASTAR member was instrumental in developing educational programming that reaches audiences and community members of all ages. The Children's Literature Centre utilized AmeriCorps members to expand reading and literacy programming and access to resources at the center. These members helped to design reading and literacy events and activities that utilize best practices and reached the campus and community, ensuring access and programming for individuals of all ages. The PAWS Pantry member ran the food pantry on campus, serving FSU students in need of emergency or supplemental food services, and that member developed new programming concerning food security, including a new community garden project. The Biology Department had members involved in ecological stewardship taking part in a study of the

interactions of organisms with their environment and educated the local and regional communities about their findings. Finally, the Education Department at University of Maryland-Hagerstown relied on Frostburg students serving with AmeriCorps and placed in classrooms across the western Maryland communities through their academic internships, developing unique lesson plans and providing additional support to children, increasing the quality of their education through more one-on-one and small group instruction in the schools.

- d. For the 2023-2024 grant year alone, our members served over 15,000 youth and adults.

10. Frostburg State University's budget for this year relied on AmeriCorps State/National funding, and we made plans and allocated funding for staffing, supplies, member training, member stipends, consultants, marketing, and travel based on the anticipated receipt of Federal funding promised. The University does not have funds allocated to replace these supports nor the living stipends, health benefits, childcare benefits, and educational benefits ASTAR AmeriCorps members received from the federal agency. The ASTAR program has now effectively shut down (save for one (1) full time staff members who remain employed to conduct shutdown operations), and there is simply no way the University can continue to operate the program this year unless AmeriCorps's termination decision is reversed.

11. ASTAR operates pursuant to a reimbursement model, where the program receives program funds pursuant to actual expenses submitted.

12. Our next reimbursement has been submitted but has not yet been received. If we do not receive such disbursements/reimbursements, it will similarly have a significant impact on

the University's budget and will result in a suspension of member service as they will no longer be able to receive their stipends.

13. The immediate termination of the ASTAR program, including the inability to be reimbursed for any expenses and with no upfront disbursement of funds, has left the program without the ability to make final living stipend payments to members, pay staff, or handle other regular costs. This termination has, without warning, taken away the income of individuals serving to improve the lives of others and build better communities for all Americans, with no immediate alternative for financial support. If this decision is not immediately reversed, with no income and the increased cost of living, members will have no choice but to find employment and move on as quickly as possible, making any hope for continued support for our communities through the ASTAR program impossible.

14. The abrupt termination of the ASTAR AmeriCorps program, as well as many others in Maryland, will also likely lead to a reduction in individuals interested in serving as AmeriCorps members, and will cause the loss of staff who are uncertain about their future involvement and employment at AmeriCorps programs still in operation.

15. The termination of the ASTAR program has resulted in the immediate loss of all members serving on the Frostburg State University Campus. The members' service cannot continue this year unless AmeriCorps's termination decision is reversed. For future years, the University would have no choice but to reduce or eliminate the programs served by members going forward, unless it is able to take on additional expenditures--funds it has not identified as being readily available--to employ full-time staff in place of federally funded AmeriCorps members. These resources and services include food for students via the campus pantry, programming in the Children's Literature Center and Center for Literary Arts, and the disruption

of ongoing research and related community outreach. The loss of AmeriCorps funds will also lead to students serving as members losing access to financial support for their education, potentially making higher education no longer affordable for them. It will also affect the University's budget because AmeriCorps members will not have access to their full education awards, which they would then use for tuition at the University. This last year, the University was eligible to receive over \$50,000 in tuition payments via education awards from current and former AmeriCorps members.

16. The absence of ASTAR will diminish Frostburg's visibility and reputation in the community, causing a corresponding decrease in marketing and student recruitment that comes as a result of ASTAR members' dedicated service.

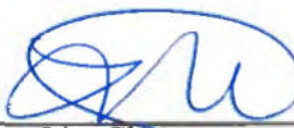
17. Frostburg State University has played a critical role in the management and implementation of an intermediary AmeriCorps program placing members at local organizations that do not have the resources or size to manage an AmeriCorps program of their own. This program has supported Maryland with a focus on the western rural region for over 30 years. The University had planned to continue these efforts to support non-profits, schools, and government agencies with future federal funding.

18. Community engagement is ingrained in Frostburg State University's identity, both among our students and within the surrounding communities. Frostburg's mission makes clear that the University serves to support regional and statewide economic and workforce development. ASTAR's efforts to build capacity in local non-profit and government agencies has supported these efforts for over 30 years and helped develop and support connections that bring the University and regional community partners together. Additionally, it is part of FSU's vision to be integrated into the fabric of the community as a valued and respected regional asset. ASTAR has been a key

public-facing program that demonstrates the University's commitment to the region and value as a regional hub and asset. The loss of ASTAR as an active and vital component of University programming has severely harmed the overall mission of our school.

19. The termination of AmeriCorps funding has already caused drastic harms to Frostburg State University's reputation, its AmeriCorps Program, the community it serves, and the members and staff supporting the community through the ASTAR AmeriCorps Program. Unless ASTAR can quickly re-start operations, with the support and resources of AmeriCorps, these harms will only get worse.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on May 5, 2025, in New Market, Maryland.



Lisa Clark

